



INVISIBLE WOUNDS COMMAND TEAM GUIDE



INTRODUCTION

The Department of the Air Force (DAF) is committed to maintaining a fit fighting force by constantly improving its support for wounded, ill, and injured Airmen and Guardians. As a leader, you play an integral role in maintaining and enhancing day-to-day unit readiness to achieve mission objectives.

This toolkit equips Command Teams with fundamentals about invisible wounds: knowledge of the signs and symptoms, the causes and impacts of invisible wounds, the resources to direct Airmen and Guardians to care, and an overview of your responsibilities as a member of the Command Team. This will also provide you with an action plan on how to encourage positive conversations and ultimately transform institutionalized stigma toward mental resilience and help-seeking. By understanding invisible wounds, command teams and mid-level supervisors will be more effectively prepared to support DAF Airmen and Guardians while maintaining mission readiness.

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What are Invisible Wounds— and Why Do We Need to Talk About Them?

WHAT ARE INVISIBLE WOUNDS AND

WHY DO WE NEED TO TALK ABOUT THEM?

Invisible wounds are exactly that—invisible. They may not be as easy to spot as a physical wound, but invisible wounds are every bit as severe. An invisible wound is any cognitive, emotional, or behavioral condition associated with trauma or serious adverse life events.

There are as many kinds of invisible wounds as there are physical ailments and injuries. Whether it is post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD), major depressive disorder (MDD), or a traumatic brain injury (TBI), your Airmen and Guardians' personal safety—and subsequently their ability to meet mission demands—will be jeopardized if they do not receive the care that they need and deserve.

Invisible wounds have massive implications for one's life at home and work. In their personal lives, Airmen and Guardians may find they have more conflict in their relationships or marriages as well as difficulty building trust with others. In the relationships they do have, those who struggle with invisible wounds may withdraw or detach from family and friends, experiencing an overall decrease in their quality or enjoyment of life.

Professionally, affected service members may fail to complete tasks or meet deadlines. They may struggle to build positive workplace relationships with peers or leaders, and in some cases, they may compromise the safety of fellow Airmen and Guardians.

The Invisible Wounds video series showcases important help seeking topics: the signs and symptoms, risk, impact, and available resources for invisible wounds, the power of positive communication, and help seeking options to reach recovery and resilience.



Learn more by visiting: <https://www.woundedwarrior.af.mil/Support-Programs/Invisible-Wounds-Initiative/Invisible-Wounds-Video-Series/>

Signs and Symptoms

It's not always easy to recognize the signs of a mental health condition, but there are a few indicators you can look out for. Some of the most common signs you may see that could indicate something is wrong include the following:

- Trouble sleeping, insomnia
- Chronic pain
- Irritation, frustration, anger
- Headaches, migraines
- Sensitivity to light and sound
- Fatigue
- Poor self-care
- Feeling anxious
- Flashbacks
- Feeling depressed
- Trouble with memory and attention
- Constant negative tone
- Avoidance or detachment

Common Causes

Invisible wounds often result from commonplace experiences. As a leader, you will need to be able to recognize these stressors in the lives of your Airmen and Guardians. While you may not know what caused the wound itself, if you know what to look for, then you will be better equipped to help.

COMMON CAUSES OF INVISIBLE WOUNDS		
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Combat exposure• Death of a loved one or comrade• Serious accidents	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Sudden or extended isolation• Sexual assault• Blast exposure	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Relationship issues• Blows to the head• Physical and emotional abuse

Impacts to Personal and Professional Life

An Airman or Guardian living with an invisible wound may experience problems in their relationships, friendships, and/or marriage. Difficulty building trust, withdrawal from family and friends, and distressing or unwanted thoughts that are difficult to get rid of are all common manifestations of untreated invisible wounds that can affect interpersonal relationships.

Professionally, you may notice signs of an untreated invisible wound, which can lead to the compromised safety of other Airmen and Guardians. The wounded individual may fail to complete missions and tasks on time and may have poor working relationships in general.

Mission readiness starts and ends with the wellbeing of each Airman and Guardian. If you notice any of these tendencies in the life of a service member you know, then take action to help them. It will save lives.



Your Integral Role As A Leader

Your Integral Role as a Leader

Changing DAF culture around mental health and help-seeking begins with leaders. Leaders must champion this effort and set an example that Airmen, Guardians, and their family members can follow. Here is what you can do to ensure that your service men and women are ready and resilient.

Supporting your Airmen and Guardians

THREE THINGS TO KEEP IN MIND TO EFFECTIVELY SUPPORT YOUR AIRMEN AND GUARDIANS WITH INVISIBLE WOUNDS

1. Build Rapport: When speaking with your Airmen or Guardians, it's necessary to have a productive conversation. The following are three techniques you can use to initiate sensitive conversations and gather information:

Reflections: Repeating their statements back to them in your own words will help you make sure that you heard them correctly (and reassure them that you are really listening). For example:

Airman: *"I'm so frustrated. I've tried everything since we got back from deployment, but I don't know what to do anymore."*

You: *"I really appreciate your willingness and openness to share this with me. I want to make sure I hear you correctly. It seems like you're saying that you are upset because you've tried a lot of things and are looking for what to do next."*

Open-ended Questions: "What" or "how" questions that encourage another person to share. Questions that begin with "why" tend to make people feel defensive. Ask questions like "What would be most helpful to you right now?" or "In what ways can I support you without overstepping?"

Summarizations: Summarize trains of thought to keep the conversation from going in circles. A good summary should articulate what the other person has said and how they are feeling. When executed thoughtfully, summaries will help the other person conclude what has been said, preventing the conversation from rehashing the same ideas.

2. Develop Near- and Long-term Recovery Strategies: Use the information that you've gathered to help your Airmen and Guardians strategize the road forward. Near-term solutions should be "quick wins" that your Airman or Guardian can accomplish in the next 72 hours. This could be as simple as taking time for a hobby that they enjoy. Long-term solutions are based on referrals that you can help provide. Try to keep the conversation focused on what steps your Airman or Guardian can take towards recovery. A list of potential referrals is included at the end of this guide.

3. Make Sure to Follow-up and Reconnect with your Airmen and Guardians within a few days of your initial conversation. People are more likely to stick with their near and long-term solution strategies if they know that they will be held accountable.

Advocating for Resilience

Leaders and mentors play a vital role in identifying and helping to address invisible wounds, and in many instances, time is of the essence. Personal or professional invisible wounds that are not proactively addressed may develop into more dangerous situations, such as self-directed or interpersonal neglect and violence. To counter this, the DAF strongly encourages leaders to lead by example and perform preventative actions, which help to identify challenges before they occur and reduce their overall impact.

FOSTER A SUPPORTIVE CULTURE

Building an environment that promotes positive communication and confidence in leadership can normalize mental health treatment and encourage service members to be comfortable sharing their personal experiences. All leaders in the Air Force and Space Force must promote a positive and supportive culture to eliminate the stigma around mental health and help-seeking.

- Recognize Airmen and Guardians who assist or encourage others to seek support for their invisible wounds and use open, positive dialogue to promote invisible wounds knowledge. Recognition could include a time-off award, a letter of commendation, or acknowledgment during Commander Calls
- [Share Airmen Recovery Stories](#) to build a positive narrative on the benefits of seeking help and to promote shared experiences of others who have gone through similar issues with invisible wounds
- Hold unit forums for service members to discuss invisible wounds topics and provide one-on-one time for each unit service member to share their challenges and to get to know them personally

EDUCATE AND PROVIDE AVAILABLE RESOURCES

Understanding the signs and symptoms of invisible wounds and sharing educational resources is a critical component in preventative action. Leaders who are aware of and who actively use these resources are better equipped to support their service members, and to support one another in changing the larger stigma against mental health.

- [Talk about the causes, impact, and warning signs and symptoms](#) of invisible wounds so that members of your unit can identify irregular behavior in themselves and others with mental health struggles. Focus on educating other leaders and rely on mid-level supervisors and non-commissioned officers to help identify behavior shifts
- Introduce individuals from installation helping agencies and mental health services during unit engagements to help service members learn available resources and give them a point of contact. Key contacts to introduce during these engagements include the Chaplain Corps, Military and Family Life Counselors (MFLC), and the Airman and Family Readiness Center (A&FRC)
- Teach core competencies for resilient behavior as outlined in the [Comprehensive Airman Fitness \(CAF\) Model](#) and teach specific life skills such as stress management, maintaining personal relationships, and financial literacy

AFFIRM POSITIVE BEHAVIOR

Leaders promote and reinforce a culture of support when they recognize the efforts of Airmen and Guardians who assist others with invisible wounds.

- Recognize an Airman or Guardian who helps another service member that appears to be struggling
- Use positive language and speak openly when talking about invisible wounds
- Describe help-seeking behavior as positive and a strength for all Airmen and Guardians
- Encourage Airmen and Guardians who need support to take the first step towards seeking help and sharing available resources
- Participate in or start an invisible wounds peer support group
- Participate in an Enlisted or Officer Council and promote invisible wounds knowledge and engagement
- Talk with an Airman or Guardian who appears to be struggling
- Draft a Letter of Commendation in personnel file
- Award Commander's Coins
- Recognize others during Commander Calls
- Highlight a success story featured by Public Affairs
- Host a featured speaker at installation events
- Grant a time-off award
- Provide supporting information for commander recognition programs (e.g., Airman, Guardian, Non-Commissioned Officer, Officer, Civilian of the Quarter or of the Year awards)
- Display support for Officer Performance Review or Enlisted Performance Review
- Provide supporting information for consideration during the selection process for Acting First Sergeant or Flight Chief
- Provide supporting information for a Department of the Air Force Medal (e.g., Achievement, Commendation, Meritorious Service)
- Show support for Stripes for Exceptional Performers

ESTABLISH & MAINTAIN KEY SPOUSE PROGRAM

A critical responsibility of a leader working to proactively address invisible wounds and create a positive culture around mental health is management of the unit's [Key Spouse program](#). The Key Spouse Program is an official Wing and Squadron commander's program that promotes partnerships with unit leadership, spouses, families, the A&FRC, and other installation agencies to provide information and resources to military families. An engaged Key Spouse Program can unlock an entire network of spouse and family advocates who play a central role in managing the care of service members at home. This network presents an ideal opportunity to disseminate resources pertaining to invisible wounds and information about available programming. Management of unit Key Spouse Programs falls under the responsibility of the unit commander, who may appoint a senior non-commissioned officer to execute the following tasks:

- Provide unit rosters to the Key Spouse when necessary to support the maintenance of a communication roster that will help facilitate information distribution
- Schedule recurring meetings with the Key Spouse as an opportunity to communicate needs and concerns on behalf of unit families

- Recognize the efforts and impact of the Key Spouse Program by instituting the Volunteer Excellence Award and Key Spouse of the Year Award
- Leverage the Key Spouse Program network to spread awareness about invisible wounds resources and programming

UNIFY INSTALLATION SUPPORT & PRIORITY OF CARE

At the Wing/Installation level, commanders must ensure that base programs in the military treatment facilities/clinics, personnel services, chaplain services, A&FRCs, and other organizations are closely coordinated. To maintain this coordination, commanders may engage in the following tasks:

- Help [oversee coordination between installation agencies/programs and Recovery Care Coordinators \(RCCs\) and Non-Medical Case Managers \(NMCMs\)](#) who manage the service member's treatment through the Case Management Team (CMT) to optimize care delivery
- Empower and equip chaplains to help Airmen and Guardians strengthen resilience. They are advocates who advise leadership on spiritual, morale, and quality-of-life issues. Ensure chaplains have information about invisible wounds and available resources, so they can help identify if service members may need support for invisible wounds
- Initiate an A-Team to support Airmen who are serving on temporary duty orders and/or are assigned to an [Airmen Medical Transition Unit \(AMTU\)](#) and, as the Wing Commander, ensure effective delivery of support and oversight through a monthly review process on individual cases of Airmen assigned to an AMTU

Encouraging Treatment

If a service member begins to show signs and symptoms of invisible wounds, leaders must be prepared to support the individual through potentially tough situations in order to successfully access care. Not all situations will be the same, but a general guide to navigating these situations is provided below.

IDENTIFY IMPACTED SERVICE MEMBERS

The first step in supporting a service member is identifying any irregular behaviors and being aware of any safety issues associated with these behaviors. All leaders should know how to identify invisible wounds in their service members and take action to ensure service members feel heard and supported.

- [Look for signs and symptoms](#) such as fatigue, anxiety, memory lapses, substance abuse, relationship problems, irritability, insomnia, poor self-care, and avoidance
- [Speak privately](#) with the service member and discuss their struggles using positive body language and communication
- Encourage service members to seek assistance and discuss options through available resources such as the Mental Health Clinic, MFLC, Military OneSource, or the Chaplain Corps
- Consider a Commander-Directed Evaluation as an appropriate next step for an individual who declines to seek services voluntarily and poses a high risk to themselves, others, or the mission

GUIDE SERVICE MEMBERS TO RESOURCES AND CARE

Once a service member chooses to seek support, leaders should make recommendations to the service member based on their circumstances and the type of care needed. All leaders should familiarize themselves with the resources available for mental health struggles. Direct supervisors should help

guide the service member to the appropriate helping resources. If a supervisor or commander is unsure of where to direct the member, the Mental Health Clinic is available for consultation.

- Know all available resources and make recommendations to the service member based on their [relevant situation and the type of care needed](#)
- Seek out information through the Medical Treatment Facilities (MTFs) for help on the best ways to navigate [next steps for further assistance](#)
- Emphasize the importance of early intervention and advocate for proactive treatment to achieve positive outcomes

REMAIN ENGAGED AND MITIGATE BARRIERS

Leaders should remain engaged with their Airmen and Guardians throughout their treatment process. Direct supervisors should individually check in with their service members to ensure they are satisfied with their treatment and there are no barriers to care. With the right support, service members will start their road to recovery, aiming to ultimately return to their normal duties. To support their Airmen and Guardians, leaders can:

- Respect the service member's right to privacy and confidentiality in the course of their treatment and offer to attend appointments with the service member at the member's request to reduce stigma, display solidarity, and offer any necessary support
- Remove potential barriers to service members getting the care they need, such as time off from work, adequate transportation, healthcare, or difficulty scheduling appointments
- Continue to communicate with the service member's family/support system, where appropriate, to ensure they are receiving adequate support, while being mindful of Privacy Act limitations and respectful of the member's privacy

Supporting Recovery

Recovery from invisible wounds is a long-term endeavor that follows service members through treatment all the way to their reintegration or their transition into civilian life. This stage involves the support, healing, and restoration of the service member, the unit, families, and the community to strengthen resilience moving forward.

PROVIDE ONGOING SUPPORT

The next phase of treatment is the responsibility of the service member's Care Management Team (CMT), which will involve the service member's Squadron Commander, Supervisor, and First Sergeant in addition to other medical and non-medical support personnel who will develop and administer a personalized care strategy. Service member leadership plays an important role orchestrating this care and supporting the individual through treatment.

- Serve as a line of communication for families to ensure their needs are addressed as law, directives, and customs allow
- Stay involved in the recovery coordination process in a support role for Airmen, Guardians, and their families, however, medical and non-medical care should be the responsibility of the RCCs, the NMCMs and the Clinical Case Managers (CCMs)
- Plan unit labor and resources accordingly based on service member's treatment schedule

REINTEGRATE OR TRANSITION SERVICE MEMBERS

The continuation of care for service members who return to duty involves careful planning and input from relevant stakeholders such as their mental health provider, RCCs, and A&FRC to ensure that service members continue to receive the support they need. Upon the service member's return to duty, leaders will coordinate support and communication with their service member.

- Consult with helping agencies and relevant stakeholders on a [reintegration plan](#) for the service member, including a safety plan and a treatment plan
- Discuss concerns about resuming normal duties and plan for monitoring environmental stressors
- Identify a safety partner to support the service member when he or she is feeling overwhelmed
- Encourage the service member to seek ongoing support from mental health providers and regular check-ins with leadership to discuss the service member's quality of life and treatment
- Adhere to the separation/retirement process so that service members can transition to civilian life at a location of their choosing, and the unit can start the process to requisition a replacement to help them meet mission requirements

MONITOR LONG-TERM RECOVERY

As the service member continues to recover from their invisible wounds, leaders must remember that mental health treatment is a long-term process. Recognizing progress and accommodating service members in their recovery will foster a culture of dignity and respect. By this stage, leaders can continue to work with impacted service members in a typical capacity but must be prepared to support them and the mission should any changes occur.

- Recognize the progress the impacted service member has made and emphasize the benefits of treatment to generate dialogue within the unit
- Remain flexible with service members who wish to attend rehabilitation events and/or organizations such as the Air Force Wounded Warrior (AFW2) Care Event program
- Watch for indicators of relapse and discuss with service member's direct supervisors if anything changes that affects their ability to perform their tasks and achieve the mission



What Can You Do Now?

What Can You Do Now?

It's time to put all of this into action. Included below is a recommended plan of action that you and your command team can implement over the next three months to help change the culture around mental health and foster a more ready and resilient fighting force.

Commander-Led Actions

An effective form of distributing information on invisible wounds is through commander-led actions, which gives the opportunity to open a dialogue about mental health directly with Airmen and Guardians. Incorporating resources into Commander Calls and encouraging conversations during office hours can encourage service members to speak up about these topics, knowing that they have support from leadership.

COMMANDER CALLS: MONTHLY

At the end of each Commander Call, bringing attention to available resources is a helpful way to reiterate that Airmen and Guardians are encouraged to seek help and to reinforce the Air Force and Space Force are actively supporting help-seeking behavior.

Share a visual: Share a PowerPoint slide with an invisible wounds factsheet (see examples below).

Host a call: If meetings are conducted strictly via phone, verbally listing examples of resources and where they can be found is an effective way to direct attendees toward useful online content. It may even be appropriate to spotlight different mental health topics firsthand and to lead a structured discussion about mental health. For example, a short agenda could be structured as follows:

- *Introduce Invisible Wounds*
 - *What are they?*
 - *What are their signs?*
 - *What can you do?*
 - *Where can you learn more?*
- *Share the story of an Airman or Guardian*
- *Discuss resources in-depth and play a "true or false" game with facts about help seeking*

OFFICE HOURS: BIWEEKLY

Holding office hours on at least a biweekly basis provides a chance to have scheduled roundtable discussions with fellow Airmen and Guardians about mental health. The goal is to facilitate conversations by presenting various topics about invisible wounds and mental health. This also gives the opportunity for commanders to better understand how service members experience mental health and opens the floor for all to provide opinions on how to improve services for mental resilience.

Please use Command Team Talking Points on [page 8](#) of this document as a reference for leading a discussion on mental health. Discussion topics to consider include:

- Airman and Guardian's thoughts on mental health
 - Experiences regarding themselves or others
- Sentiments regarding resource availability
- Open forum where anyone can offer thoughts on how to improve resources or services, or to highlight specific resources that they believe are making the most positive impact
- Provide a chance for Airmen and Guardians to be a part of the conversation directly

EMAILS: MONTHLY

Provided are three examples you can send to your Airmen and Guardians. The following content of the email is adjustable and can be sent as is or incorporated into established internal communication efforts such as a monthly email or newsletter. For established communication, adding in a reoccurring mental health resources section is encouraged to ensure information on Invisible Wounds is consistently shared to service members.

EMAIL EXAMPLE #1



To:

Subject: [Month 1] 2021: Invisible Wounds//Culture Change

Text: Addressing invisible wounds is a top priority of the Chief of Staff of the Air Force. He expects us to take care of our Airmen and Guardians, especially those who are living with invisible wounds. Communicating positively about invisible wounds and encouraging Airmen and Guardians to seek treatment, if needed, are the responsibilities of everyone within the command chain. You are in the best position to shape and champion this new culture and you do so through your words, actions, and the behaviors you formally and informally reward within your unit. We know that in order to support readiness and build a more lethal force, we must foster resilience to include mental fitness, within our Airmen and Guardians.

The Challenge:

- Recognize and commend the efforts of Airmen or Guardians and spouses, caregivers, that demonstrate the positive change and promote the culture we seek
- Empower your supervisors, SNCOs, and NCOs to reward, acknowledge, assist, and support culture change. They are the front-line connection
- Over the next few months, you will see information campaign materials (fact sheets, social media, and emails) that focus on enabling us to recognize Airmen and Guardians with invisible wounds, engage, and assist them in seeking treatment. Leverage these materials at your Commander's Calls
- Engage with your Airmen and Guardians and encourage them to understand the information and know the importance of supporting Airmen and Guardians with invisible wounds

Our most important resource is our Airmen and Guardians. We should strive to recognize those who show positive actions, behavior, and support their fellow Airmen and Guardians.

V/R

Wing CC

EMAIL EXAMPLE #2



To:

Subject: [Month 2] 2021: Invisible Wounds // Signs and Symptoms

Text: The Air Force and Space Force missions are demanding. Airmen and Guardians are highly trained to identify physical danger but may not always identify mental stressors in themselves or others. Airmen and Guardians need to understand the risk of developing an invisible wound and the impact of an invisible wound on an Airman or Guardian's personal and professional life. An Airman or Guardian should be able to recognize signs and symptoms of invisible wounds in themselves and in their peers, and know about available resources to support Airmen or Guardians living with an invisible wound and their path to recovery—to ensure a mentally strong, resilient, and lethal Total Force.

Invisible Wounds Resources: If you or a fellow Airman or Guardian are experiencing signs and symptoms of invisible wounds, there are a variety of resources available to support recovery, including on-base chaplain services, Military and Family Life Counseling (MFLC) Program, the Director of Psychological Health (DPH), and Military Treatment Facility (MTF), and more.

To learn more about invisible wounds and available resources available to you and your fellow Airmen and Guardians visit www.MissionReadyForce.com.

INVISIBLE WOUNDS.
KNOW THE FACTS. TAKE ACTION. FOSTER RESULTS.

An invisible wound is a cognitive, emotional, or behavioral change that can occur from a single traumatic event or a series of events, including combat and non-combat experiences.

COMMON CAUSES
An invisible wound can occur from a single traumatic event or a series of events, including combat and non-combat experiences.

- Blast exposure
- Physical and emotional abuse
- Combat exposure
- Serious accidents
- Civilian or military violence
- Sexual assault

IMPACT
Invisible wounds are not just mental or physical wounds. Unresolved invisible wounds can have negative impacts on your life.

PERSONAL LIFE
• Relationship or marital problems
• Difficulty building trust
• Withdrawal or disengagement from family and friends
• Decreased overall quality of life

PROFESSIONAL LIFE
• Decreased ability of your Airman or Guardians
• Failure to complete mission or tasks
• Increased irritability
• Poor work relationships

SIGNS AND SYMPTOMS
Signs and symptoms may not appear immediately, sometimes emerging years after an incident.

- Trouble sleeping, insomnia (difficult falling or staying asleep)
- Changes in appetite
- Increased pain from headaches, migraines, or other conditions
- Headaches, migraines, or other conditions
- Increased irritability
- Changes in ability to concentrate or focus
- Changes in ability to remember or recall
- Changes in ability to focus or stay on task
- Changes in ability to think clearly
- Changes in ability to make decisions or solve problems
- Changes in ability to follow instructions
- Changes in ability to work or perform
- Changes in ability to interact with others
- Changes in ability to work or perform
- Changes in ability to interact with others
- Changes in ability to work or perform
- Changes in ability to interact with others

www.MissionReadyForce.com

INVISIBLE WOUNDS.
KNOW THE RESOURCES.

94% of Airmen who have received PTSD treatment continued to improve in their lives.

TALK TO SOMEONE

- Trusted Advisors**
Commanders and their staff, Early Warning Advisor, The chaplain, and other trusted advisors can help support you through challenging times.
- Chaplains**
Our Air Force chaplains provide support for the full range of spiritual, religious, and moral needs. They are available for one-on-one counseling, group counseling, and spiritual direction. They also provide support for the full range of spiritual, religious, and moral needs.
- Military and Family Life Counseling (MFLC)**
Our Air Force MFLC is the Air Force's Family Readiness Center. It provides support for the full range of personal, professional, and family needs. It also provides support for the full range of personal, professional, and family needs.
- Military OneSource**
Our Air Force Military OneSource is the Air Force's Family Readiness Center. It provides support for the full range of personal, professional, and family needs. It also provides support for the full range of personal, professional, and family needs.
- Helpline Centers**
Our Air Force Helpline Centers are available for the full range of personal, professional, and family needs. They also provide support for the full range of personal, professional, and family needs.

SEEK MEDICAL SUPPORT

- Military Treatment Facility (MTF)**
Our Air Force MTFs provide the full range of medical and behavioral health services. They also provide support for the full range of personal, professional, and family needs.
- Behavioral Health Clinics**
Our Air Force Behavioral Health Clinics provide the full range of medical and behavioral health services. They also provide support for the full range of personal, professional, and family needs.
- Director of Psychological Health (DPH)**
Our Air Force DPH provides the full range of medical and behavioral health services. They also provide support for the full range of personal, professional, and family needs.

EMERGENCIES

- Military Crisis Line**
Our Air Force Military Crisis Line is available 24/7 for the full range of personal, professional, and family needs. They also provide support for the full range of personal, professional, and family needs.

EMAIL EXAMPLE #3



To:

Subject: [Month 3] 2021: Invisible Wounds and Available Resources

Text: What is an Invisible Wound? An invisible wound is a cognitive, emotional, or behavioral condition that can be associated with trauma or serious adverse life events. Examples of possible diagnoses are major depressive disorder, post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD) and traumatic brain injury (TBI).

If you have ever experienced or witnessed a traumatic incident, you could be at risk for developing an invisible wound. Invisible wounds can be caused by several traumatic events, including:

- Death of a loved one or friend
- Blows to the head
- Combat exposure
- Blast exposure
- Serious accidents
- Sexual assault
- Physical or emotional abuse

Invisible wounds have negative impacts and can interfere with both personal and professional life. Failure to complete missions on time, poor work relationships and incomplete tasks are a few examples of how an invisible wound can affect your professional life. Invisible wounds may also impact an Airman or Guardian's relationship with family and friends, resulting in withdrawal, detachment, or difficulty building trust. Airmen and Guardians with invisible wounds are not in the fight alone.

Invisible Wounds Resources: If you or a fellow Airman or Guardian are experiencing signs and symptoms of invisible wounds, there are a variety of resources available to support recovery, including on-base chaplain services, Military and Family Life Counseling (MFLC) Program, the Director of Psychological Health (DPH), and Military Treatment Facility (MTF), and more.

To learn more about invisible wounds and available resources available to you and your fellow Airmen and Guardians visit www.MissionReadyForce.com.

Activities Checklist

The following checklist aims to track the recommended activities in this guide. Additional space has also been provided to account for supplementary activities that are new or unique to your unit.

ACTIVITY	STATUS
Review Activities Calendar on Weekly Basis	
Publish Weekly Social Media Post	
Send Monthly Invisible Wounds Email	
Hold Commander Call	
Hold Commander Office Hours	
Distribute Print Posters Month 1	
Distribute Print Posters Month 2	
Distribute Print Posters Month 3	
Engage the Key Spouse Program	
Schedule a stand-alone meeting with the Wing Key Spouse Program to review available invisible wounds information and resources	
Introduce the program during Commander Calls	
Engage the local chaplain	
Schedule a stand-alone meeting with the chaplain to review invisible wounds resources	
Invite chaplain to speak during Commander Calls, Office Hours, or in-person events	
Leverage the Civic Leader Program	
Share information on Civic Leader Program during Commander Calls or Office Hours	

3-Month Reoccurring Schedule

Below you will find a suggested monthly cadence for recommended activities listed in this guide intended to span a three-month period. Due to the circumstances of each month, there may be a topic you wish to discuss with your unit or specific talking points to highlight in these engagements.

Sun	Mon	Tues	Wed	Thurs	Fri	Sat
	Set up posters throughout facility		Social media post			
		Commander Call		Commander office hours;-round table topic		
	Newsletter email		Social media post			
		Meet with local chaplain or Key Spouse Program		Commander office hours		

Information Distribution

There are several options for you to share content including social media, email, and posters in physical locations. Distributing content on internal command social media and through your command newsletter emails is strongly encouraged. If you do not own a command social media account, it is recommended to connect with your Public Affairs team or other outreach groups with access to wide audiences that can distribute content on your behalf. The samples provided in this section serve as a standard template and customization of these samples based off your audience is recommended (e.g., Changing Airmen to Guardians).

SOCIAL MEDIA

Post graphics with captions on available platforms (Facebook, Twitter, Instagram) biweekly. The Guide has provided six sample posts to utilize across a three-month period below. If the command does not have its own platforms, connect with other groups, for example the Air Force Public Affairs office (SAF/PA), to distribute.

MONTH 1

Facebook

Airmen who are emotionally and mentally resilient typically display behaviors like asking for help when needed, having a healthy work/life balance, and acknowledging their emotions. Learn about additional traits of resilience by visiting www.MissionReadyForce.com.

Instagram

Airmen who are emotionally & mentally resilient typically display behaviors like asking for help when needed, having healthy work/life balance, & acknowledging their emotions. Learn other traits of resilience by visiting www.MissionReadyForce.com.

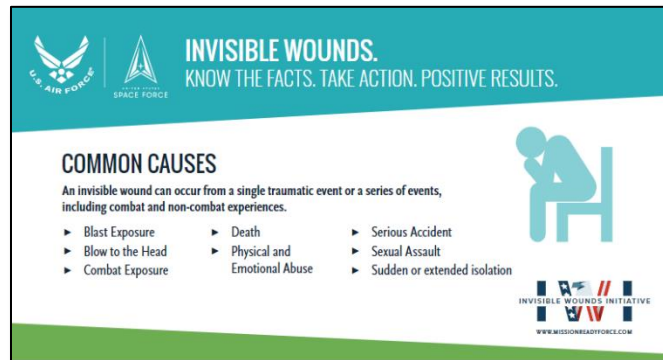


Facebook

If you've ever experienced or witnessed a traumatic incident, you could be at risk for developing an invisible wound. #Invisiblewounds can be caused by a traumatic event, including death; blows to the head; combat exposure; blast exposure; serious accidents; sexual assault; and/or physical or emotional abuse. Know your risk and take action. Visit www.MissionReadyForce.com.

Instagram

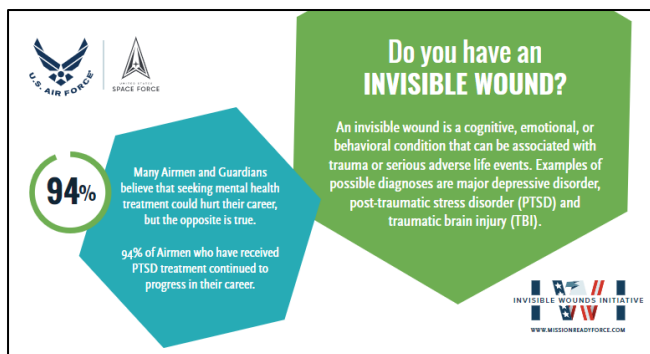
If you've ever experienced a traumatic incident, you could be at risk for developing #invisiblewounds. Know your risk and take action to learn more: www.MissionReadyForce.com.



MONTH 2

Facebook

Approximately 94 percent of Airmen who have received PTSD treatment continued to progress in their career. Learn about signs and symptoms of #invisiblewounds and how to seek support through Department of the Air Force resources. Discover more by visiting: www.MissionReadyForce.com.

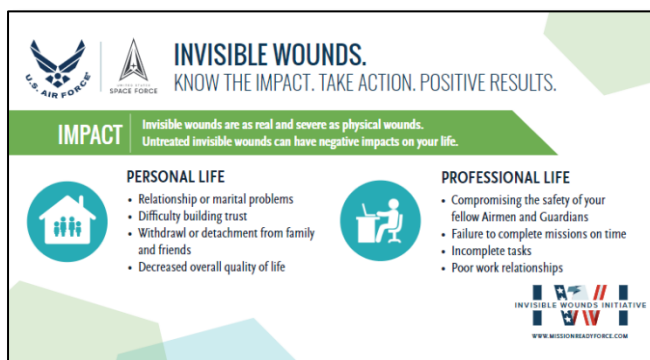


Instagram

Approximately 94 percent of Airmen who have received #PTSD continued to progress in their career. Learn more about #invisiblewounds and how to seek support through #AirForce and DoD resources at www.MissionReadyForce.com.

Facebook

Have you noticed withdrawal or detachment behaviors from a fellow Airman? Such behavior can indicate signs of an invisible wound, which are as real and severe as physical wounds. Learn how #invisiblewounds can impact daily life and ways to seek care by checking out these resources: www.MissionReadyForce.com.



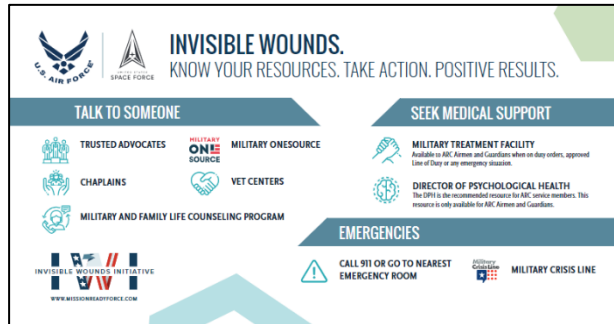
Instagram

Have you noticed withdrawal or detachment behaviors from a fellow Airman? Such behavior can indicate signs of #invisiblewounds. Learn how invisible wounds impact daily life & ways to seek support www.MissionReadyForce.com.

MONTH 3

Facebook

Feeling drawn back into a traumatic experience? You may be experiencing symptoms of an invisible wound. You are not alone. The #AirForce cares and provides many resources to support you through recovery. Learn more about the signs and symptoms of #invisiblewounds and their impact at www.MissionReadyForce.com.



Instagram

Feeling drawn back into a traumatic experience? You may be experiencing symptoms of an invisible wound. You are not alone. The #AirForce cares & provides lots of resources to support you through recovery. Learn more about #invisiblewounds and their impact at www.MissionReadyForce.com.

Facebook

Have you been avoiding certain situations or people, or feeling detached from family and friends? These are signs and symptoms of #invisiblewounds and resources are available to support you and your fellow Wingmen seek the help you need. Visit, www.MissionReadyForce.com.



Instagram

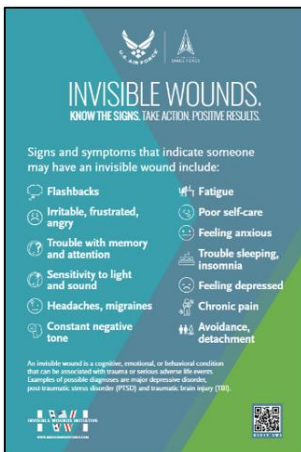
Have you been avoiding certain situations or people, or feeling detached from family and friends? These are signs and symptoms of #invisiblewounds and resources are available to support you and your fellow Wingmen seek the help you need. Visit, www.MissionReadyForce.com.

POSTERS AND TABLE TENTS

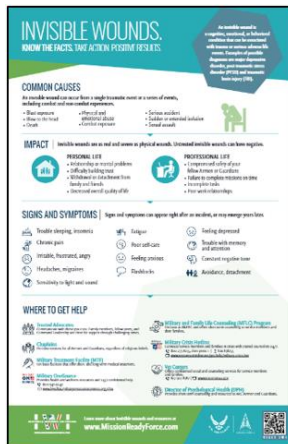
Incorporating posters and table tents are a way to spread information on location and ensure that the campaign reaches a wide range of Airmen and Guardians. Places to consider are high traffic areas, where service members are more likely to have time to stop and look at the content.

MONTH 1	MONTH 2	MONTH 3
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Introduce invisible wounds with a poster created for frequently accessed areas such as entrances to buildings, cafeterias, hallways, gymnasiums, and other large spaces.



Share posters that provide resources and information on invisible wounds in areas where Airmen and Guardians are more likely to have time to stop and read the content, in places such as restrooms, bulletin boards, conference rooms, etc.



Showcasing successful recovery stories is a helpful way to encourage Airmen and Guardians to speak about their own mental health. A poster with more information should be placed in areas where Airmen and Guardians may have a chance to stop and read the content such as restrooms, bulletin boards, conference rooms, etc.





Mental Health and Resilience Resources

MENTAL HEALTH AND RESILIENCE RESOURCES

Emergencies

- **Call 911** or go to the nearest emergency room
- **[Crisis Text Line](#)**: 24/7 confidential crisis support. Text HOME to 741741 to connect with a counselor
- **[Military Crisis Line](#)**: 24/7 hotline offering confidential, immediate support. Call 800-273-8255, then press 1; text 838255; or chat online
- **[National Suicide Prevention Lifeline](#)**: Call 1-800-273-8255 or chat online
- **[Safe Helpline](#)**: anonymous, confidential, 24/7, and tailored sexual assault support in the DoD community, Call 1-877-995-5247 or live [chat](#)

General Mental Health

- **Trusted Advocates** includes family members, fellow Wingmen, or Command Leadership
- **[Air Force Chaplains](#)** provide confidential counseling and spiritual and religious guidance
- **[Military OneSource-Mental Health Resources](#)**: includes resources to support a variety of mental health issues
- **[Military and Family Life Counseling \(MFLC\) Program](#)** provides short-term counseling for service members and families. Call 800-342-9647 or contact the local MFLC
- **[Vet Center](#)** provides 24/7 confidential social and psychological services for Airmen and Guardians, Veterans, and families. Call 877-927-8387
- **[Military Health System](#)** provides information on signs of distress, self-assessments, articles, and additional resources to help active or retired military personnel and their family
- **[Department of the Air Force Invisible Wounds Initiative](#)** provides resources to help support Airmen and Guardians with invisible wounds, defined as post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD); traumatic brain injury (TBI); or other cognitive, emotional, or behavioral condition that can be associated with trauma or serious adverse life events
 - **[Invisible Wounds Video Series](#)** showcases four important help seeking topics: knowledge of the signs and symptoms of invisible wounds, risk, impact, and resources of invisible wounds, the power of positive communication, and help seeking options to reach recovery and resilience
 - **[Invisible Wounds Recovery Stories](#)** from service members on how seeking treatment for invisible wounds made them stronger and more resilient
 - **[Wingman Discussion Guide](#)** a four-step guide on how to have a positive conversation and encourage fellow Wingmen to seek support for mental health concerns
 - **[Myth Buster: Seeking support/treatment is a weakness](#)** an article highlighting the fact that asking for help, seeking support when needed, and focusing on mental health are all actions of a resilient Wingman
 - **[Myth Buster: Seeking mental health treatment will negatively impact my security clearance](#)** is an article explaining that seeking treatment early helps avoid negative impacts on an Airman or Guardian's ability to gain and/or maintain their security clearance

- [Air Force Wounded Warrior Program \(AFW2\)](#) is a Congressionally mandated and Federally funded organization tasked with taking care of U.S. Air Force wounded, ill, and injured Airmen, Guardians, Veterans, and their families. AFW2 provides personalized restorative care throughout the transformation back to duty, separation, or retirement, staying in contact with them throughout the process as an Airman for Life and the goal of leaving them well-equipped to manage challenges, regardless of injury or illness

Mental Health Treatment

- [Military Treatment Facility \(MTF\)](#) offers short- and long-term medical treatment options for direct health and wellness care for Airmen and Guardians. These programs are available to ARC Airmen when on active-duty orders, approved Line of Duty, or in any emergency situation. Within your local MTF there are the following:
 - **Primary Care Behavioral Health (PCBH)** is a primary care behavioral health program, integrated into primary care clinics, and available to all active-duty service members, retirees, and their family members; formerly known as Behavioral Health Optimization Program (BHOP)
 - **Mental Health Clinic** offers professional mental health services, provided by psychiatrists, psychologists, and social workers, to all active-duty Air Force personnel
- [Military OneSource](#) provides health and wellness resources; nonmedical counseling in-person, by phone, video, or online chat; and 24/7 confidential help. Call 800-342-9647 or **chat** online
- [TRICARE](#) provides this resource for all emergency and non-emergency mental health treatment
- [inTransition](#) is a confidential program offering specialized coaching and assistance for active-duty service members, Air Force National Guard and Reserve members, Veterans, and retirees who need access to mental health resources. Call 800-424-7877
- [Director of Psychological Health \(DPH\)](#) is a resource exclusive to AFRC Reservists and who provides individualized short-term, solution-focused counseling and refers or connects ARC Airmen to other Air Force resources for short- and long-term medical or non-medical treatment
- [AFRC Psychological Health Advocacy Program \(PHAP\)](#) provides psychological health referral services to AFRC Reservists and their families

Anxiety

- [Military Health System: Anxiety](#) includes print and video information on symptoms of anxiety as well as a link to an anxiety self-assessment tool
- [Military Health System: Anxiety Fact Sheets](#) provides links to various fact sheets about anxiety
- [Department of Air Force Resilience: Leader's Guide on Anxiety](#) is a tip sheet on signs and symptoms of anxiety, recommended Wingman actions, and considerations for leaders
- [Make the Connection](#) is an online resource designed to connect Veterans, their family members and friends, and other supporters with information, resources, and solutions to issues affecting their lives

Depression

- [Military Health System - Depression](#): includes print and video information on symptoms of depression as well as a link to a depression self-assessment tool
- [Department of Air Force Resilience: Leader's Guide on Depression](#): is a tip sheet on signs and symptoms of depression, recommended Wingman actions, and considerations for leaders
- [Make the Connection](#): is an online resource designed to connect Veterans, their family members and friends, and other supporters with information, resources, and solutions to issues affecting their lives

Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD)

- [Invisible Wounds PTSD Infographic](#): a visual tip sheet on PTSD rates, signs and symptoms, evidenced-based treatments, and where to get help
- [Military Health Service – PTSD](#): includes print and video information on symptoms of PTSD as well as a link to a PTSD self-assessment tool
- [National Center for PTSD](#): is part of the Department of Veterans Affairs and contains information regarding self-help and coping methods, therapists, treatment options, and other ways to help service members and Veterans living with PTSD
- [Veterans Affairs Office of Research & Development](#): provides research-based information on PTSD
- [Air Force Medical Service](#): provides PTSD information, risk factors and resources
- [National Institute of Mental Health](#): provides PTSD information and resources
- [Department of Air Force Resilience: Leader's Guide on PTSD](#): is a tip sheet on signs and symptoms of PTSD, recommended Wingman action, and considerations for leaders
- [Understanding PTSD and PTSD Treatment](#): is a booklet about PTSD and available treatment for PTSD from the National Center for PTSD
- [Dispelling Myths About Posttraumatic Stress Disorder](#): is an article from the Real Warriors Campaign that covers the top myths that may discourage service members from seeking help for PTSD
- [Strategies for Coping with Flashbacks](#): is an article from the Real Warriors Campaign that shares strategies for how to cope with flashbacks
- **Mobile Apps**: These apps provide information and tools to help manage PTSD
 - [PTSD Coach](#): provides information on how to manage symptoms that can occur after trauma
 - [PTSD Family Coach](#): provides information for family members to help loved ones experiencing PTSD
 - [PTSD Decision Aid](#): includes PTSD information, treatment options and how to start treatment

Traumatic Brain Injury (TBI)

- [Invisible Wounds TBI Infographic](#): is an educational resource to help readers recognize the signs of traumatic brain injury and take action when support is needed
- [National Intrepid Center of Excellence \(NICoE\)](#): is a research, diagnosis, and treatment facility at Walter Reed National Military Medical Center in Bethesda, Maryland utilizing collaborative

short- and long-term treatment plans with a variety of providers. Call 301-319-3600 or visit the website

- [Traumatic Brain Injury Center of Excellence \(TBI CoE\)](#): provides TBI clinical tools, educational resources, and research information on state-of-the-science traumatic brain injury care from point-of-injury to reintegration for service members, Veterans, and their families
- [National Institute of Neurological Disorders and Stroke \(NINDS\)](#): supports TBI research through grants to major medical institutions across the country and conducts TBI research in its intramural laboratories and Clinical Center at the National Institute of Health in Bethesda, Maryland
- [Center for Disease Control and Prevention](#): provides resources and statistics on traumatic brain injury and concussion in the U.S
- [Veterans Affairs Office of Research & Development](#): provides fact sheets and articles on TBI

Suicide Prevention

- [Invisible Wounds Suicide Prevention Infographic](#): suicide prevention starts with recognizing and treating invisible wounds and maintaining resiliency; this resource highlights statistics, warning signs and symptoms, and resources for help
- [Invisible Wounds Suicide Take Action Infographic](#): this resource outlines a four-step process to having conversations about invisible wounds, which may help prevent suicide
- [Department of Air Force Resilience: Leader's Guide on Suicidal Behaviors](#) is a tip sheet on signs and symptoms of suicidal behaviors, recommended Wingman action, and considerations for leaders
- [Family Suicide Prevention Training](#): provides resources for individual training and small group discussions to help recognize sources of distress and warning signs; understand different options for intervening and available resources; and appreciate the importance of being proactive and developing strong protective factors
NOTE: Link may not work properly on an installation or government computer
- [Resilience Tactical Pause Tools](#): includes examples of exercises, discussions, and ideas from across the Air Force to prevent suicide
- [Veteran/Airmen Suicide Self-Check Quiz](#): this quiz is a safe, easy way to learn whether stress and depression might be affecting you
- [Under Investigation Checklist](#): provides leaders with a tool to provide support for Airmen upon notification of an investigation or anticipated investigation
- [How to Talk to a Child About Suicide Attempt in Your Family](#): provides a guide for families of preschoolers, school-age, and teenagers

Substance Abuse

- [Department of Air Force Resilience: Leader's Guide on Substance Abuse](#): is a tip sheet on signs and symptoms of substance abuse, recommended Wingman action, and considerations for leaders
- [Military Health Service - Substance Abuse](#): conducts research and provides services for the treatment of certain conditions, including substance abuse
- [SAMHSA's National Helpline](#): is a free, confidential, 24/7 treatment, referral, and information service for individuals and families facing mental and/or substance use disorders. Call: 1-800-662-HELP (4357)

- [Air Force Alcohol and Drug Abuse Prevention and Treatment \(ADAPT\) Program](#) is available for active-duty service members or Guard and Reserve members with active orders, who may be struggling with substance abuse. Contact your local MTF or trusted advocate for information

Sexual Assault

- [Air Force Sexual Assault and Prevention Response \(SAPR\) program](#) has a mission to educate, advocate, and collaborate to respond to and stop sexual assault and its harmful effects on the Air Force
- [Department of Air Force Resilience: Leaders Guide on Sexual Assault:](#) is a tip sheet on sexual assault, recommended Wingman action, and considerations for leaders
- [Family Advocacy Program \(FAP\):](#) provides clinical and non-clinical services for Airmen and families impacted by violence, abuse, and neglect. Visit [MilitaryINSTALLATIONS](#) or call 800-342-9647 to contact the local FAP
- [Rape, Abuse, and Incest National Network \(RAINN\):](#) is the nation's largest anti-sexual violence organization; they operate the Safe Helpline for DoD at 877-995-5247 and provide other resources for sexual assault response and survivors
- [Make the Connection:](#) is a one-stop resource where Veterans and their families and friends can access support services needed and hear other's experiences with military sexual trauma
- [Retaliation Reporting and Sexual Assault Resources:](#) provides information on protections from retaliation, where and how to report, and sexual assault support resources
- [CATCH a Serial Offender Program:](#) is a DoD program that allows service members making a restricted report the opportunity to anonymously disclose information about suspects and incidents to help the DoD identify serial offenders

Readiness and Resilience

- [Department of the Air Force Resilience:](#) provides resources to help forces and families thrive by enhancing personal well-being, optimizing human performance, and promoting a culture of dignity and respect for all
 - [Air Force Wingman Online:](#) is a comprehensive Airmen Fitness resource to equip families to help Airmen and Guardians in distress.
 - [Helping Agencies Resources:](#) summarizes the most commonly found helping agencies on an Air Force or Space Force base; note that services vary from base to base
 - [Small Group Discussion Guides:](#) provides guidance on a variety of resilience topics, including physical, belongingness and connection, and self-care
- Resilience Podcasts and Mobile Apps:
 - [The Blue Grit Podcast:](#) features conversations with military leaders, mental health experts, elite athletes, Veterans and other individuals who have overcome adversity. Each podcast highlights techniques used to overcome profound challenges and how to help Airmen deal with challenges
 - [USAF Connect App:](#) is equipped with over 20 robust features that are exclusively built and designed to enable, engage, and empower Total Force across the globe; available for Apple or Android
 - [Resilience Apps:](#) links to several apps that provide tips and tools to help with a variety of physical, emotional, and mental health issues; available for Apple or Android

- **[Air Force Personnel Center \(AFPC\)](#)**: leads Career Management and Airmen and Family benefits and services
 - **[Career Management](#)**: oversees services to manage Force employment and career (e.g., Assignment, Fitness Program, Force Development, Retention)
 - **[Airmen & Family Division](#)**: oversees forces and family readiness (e.g., Airmen and Family Readiness Center), retiree services, and Air Force Resilience Operations. Select programs include:
 - **[Airmen and Family Readiness Center \(A&FRC\)](#)**: is the focal point to assist all service members and their families, including DoD civilians (OCNONUS and OCONUS), in easing their adaptation to the military lifestyle and enrichment of their personal and work life. Contact the A&FRC office at your installation.
 - **[Employee Assistance Program \(EAP\)](#)**: provides confidential services for civilians and their families as well as Guard and Reserve to manage everyday challenges and work on more complex issues. Call 866-580-9078 or Civilian EAP [CONUS](#) or [OCONUS](#)
 - **[Exceptional Family Member Program \(EFMP\)](#)**: is a DoD-wide program, offering comprehensive and coordinated support to families with a special needs member.
 - **[Key Spouse Program](#)**: is an official Air Force Unit Family Readiness Program designed to enhance readiness, personal/family resiliency and establish a sense of Air Force community.
 - **[Community Programs](#)**: offers targeted community programs—including Heartlink Spouse Orientation, Bundles for Babies, Car Care Because We Care, Spouse Employment, and Childcare—to help make everyday life on base a little easier and help take care of military families. Contact your local A&FRC for availability
 - **[Yellow Ribbon Reintegration Program \(YRRP\)](#)**: is a DoD-wide program available for [Air National Guard](#) and [Air Force Reserve](#) members, their families, and communities to promote wellbeing by connecting them with resources throughout the deployment cycle; helps service members and their families prepare for, see through, and reintegrate after deployments
 - **[Airmen Readiness Fact Sheet](#)**: a fact sheet to help Airmen and Guardians make sure they are mentally and emotionally resilient at home and on duty
 - **[Military Health Service – Stress](#)**: facts and tips on stress and resilience; includes a stress self-assessment tool
 - **[Military Health Service – Sleep](#)**: video and digital facts and tips on sleep health and resilience; includes a sleep self-assessment tool

About DAF Resilience

About DAF Resilience

In response to the Chief of Staff of the Air Force (CSAF)'s August 2020 strategic approach titled Accelerate Change or Lose, the Department of the Air Force (DAF) has embarked on a momentous endeavor to build a culture of resilience calibrated to the needs of Airmen, Guardians, and families.

This integrated system of care centers on seven domains of resilience, further detailed in the DAF Integrated Resilience Roadmap, that advance four primary end states: 1) Building an Integrated Framework, 2) DAF Programs and Resources, 3) Technology, Research, and Data, and 4) Culture.

Directly aligned to the path set forward by the Culture end state, the Assistant Secretary of the Air Force for Manpower and Reserve Affairs (SAF/MR) has driven the DAF's mental resilience initiatives since 2016. Engaging Airmen, Guardians, families, care providers, and leadership, SAF/MR has led the DAF-wide effort to improve the perception of invisible wounds, remove barriers to care, enhance continuum of care processes, and provide an equitable and supportive environment for service members with invisible wounds.

